

THE PRIZE OF ROME.

An Annual Award by the French Government for Art Works.

The French nation has for many years owned a handsome palace in the Eternal City, as Rome is frequently called. It is known as the Villa de Medici. It is a beautiful building, standing in the middle of a garden filled with statuary and fine old trees, commanding a view of the famous old city and fitted up with superb furniture, tapestries and pictures, the remains of the former greatness of the once powerful Medici family, who for so many years were high in the political affairs of Italy. Here each year are sent four young Frenchmen—a painter, a sculptor, an architect and a carver of precious stones. These lads are chosen by a competition held at the School of Fine Arts in Paris every spring. The examinations are very searching, and the successful candidates are greatly envied, as they may be, for, having won their honors, they are housed, fed and provided with a studio and an ample sum of money to pay their expenses for four years—all by the French government.

So it will be seen that it is no small honor to have passed successfully through the ordeal, for not only is the opportunity for the delightful life under such splendid conditions to be desired, but the youth who gains the distinction of being the prize winner is for evermore a marked man. His work is watched for, his future progress is noted, and his career may be said to be definitely made. The conditions under which the examinations are made are very strict. Preliminary trials take place early in the season. All who desire to enter inscribe their names at the government school. Of course only French lads may try. For the painters, a subject is given out—perhaps some incident from the Bible, or an episode from a mythological story—and sketches are made by the students.

Twenty or thirty of the most promising sketches are selected, and the young men thus chosen are notified. These lads then make drawings in charcoal of the subject.

Another selection is made, and those chosen then make paintings. This time ten canvases are selected and their authors go, as they say in French, en loge, which means that each man of the ten enters a small studio, where an easel and materials for work, and he is allowed such models as are necessary to complete his picture. His first sketch of the subject given out is handed to him, and from this he must make a painting about 3 feet by 4 in size. He is not allowed to make any material changes in his composition, but must keep very closely to his original design. Outside his door sits an employee of the school, known as a "guardian," whose business it is to see that the student receives no help, nor may he leave the building, save under charge of this sentinel, who is watchful and keen and not to be trifled with. Three weeks are allowed in which to complete the work. Then the canvases are placed in frames. The works are the same size every year, and the old frames do duty over and over again.

Now is an anxious period while a jury composed of distinguished artists deliberate on the merits of the works to determine the order of their excellence. Finally a day comes when all is arranged. The ten pictures are placed in a gallery of the school, and each is numbered; the doors are opened, and the anxious crowd of students rushes in to learn the decision.

You may be sure that the happy No. 1 is a hero and that he is carried around the Latin quarter on the shoulders of his companions. The strain of the past few months is over, and we may forgive him if he gives way to a lot of boisterous nonsense for a few hours. To No. 2 there is some consolation for so narrowly missing the great end he has aimed for, a sort of "consolation prize" being awarded to him in the shape of a sum of money that enables him to travel for a year. Besides, he will compete the next year. The third man is the successful competitor of the year following.

The winning picture is hung permanently in the school, and the happy man goes to Rome. Each year he must send home evidences of his application and progress, that the state may know he is improving his time.—A Famous French Painter, by Arthur Hoebner, in St. Nicholas.

The Irbit Fair.

The Irbit fair, which is held at Irbit, in the province of Perm, between the 1st of February and the 1st of March, is not on the great trading route between Russia and Siberia, and yet it is at Irbit that Siberia is supplied with manufactured goods for the year, and to which Siberia sends a large portion of her furs, skins, fish, honey, wax, hempseed, linseed and even butter. Here, too, is a great market for Chinese tea and silk and for many products of central Asia. Most of the goods left unsold from the Nijni Novgorod fair are sent to Irbit, and Siberian goods left unsold from the Irbit fair, are, in turn, sent on to Nijni Novgorod. For Russian goods the traders enjoy some special privileges for carriage from fair to fair.

The Irbit fair dates from 1643, but up to the beginning of the present century had not exceeded a turn over of 2,000,000 rubles per annum. In 1863, however, it had grown to 50,000,000, and in 1887 it reached 37,000,000, which was the high water mark. By 1892 the turn over had declined to 34,000,000 rubles, and this year is expected to suffer a good deal from the Transsiberian railway, now in course of construction, which will take Siberian grain and furs and other products direct on to the Russian railway system. Irbit itself is but a small place of 5,000 inhabitants, but during the fair the population rises to 100,000, and many of the houses are open only while the fair lasts.—Cham-

A Curious Telephone.

"I have a most remarkable telephone in my house," remarked a resident of the western addition. "I noticed that at times I could hear very distinctly the conversation in the next house. Suddenly it would be broken off short in the middle of a sentence, and I could not hear another word. It would become audible again just as suddenly.

"By a series of experiments I have found out that the sound is conducted by the water running through the pipes. When the water is turned on in my house, I can hear all the conversation in any of the rooms next door in which there is running water. When I turn off the water, all sounds stop suddenly.

HEROIC ACT OF A SOCIETY GIRL.

Braves the Shame of a Patrol Wagon Ride to Please a Little Boy.

She was not only herself a member of that society which considers itself entitled to a capital letter, but her family had been members thereof in good and regular standing for at least three generations. She was shopping on State street one bright midsummer morning when a crowd at Washington street attracted her attention. Being curious, she investigated that crowd. She found in the center thereof a small boy sobbing bitterly under the guardianship of two big policemen. To her horror, she recognized in the small boy her cousin's little son.

The little fellow had slipped and broken or sprained his ankle. He knew where he lived, but he could not get there. The policemen had sent for the patrol wagon, the only vehicle at their command, for the little sufferer.

The child was in perfect agony at the prospect of being carried off in a patrol wagon by two policemen. The society girl interferred. She told the policemen this was her nephew. She told them where he lived. The address corresponded to that which the little fellow had himself given them.

"I'll get a cab and take him home," said the society girl, a reasonable suggestion enough, surely, but the policemen would not hear to that. They had sent for the patrol wagon, and some one must have a ride in it. It was not to be ordered out for nothing. They could not take the child home in a cab. "We'll take him where you say he lives, lady, but he must go with us."

The patrol wagon came. The child was almost convulsed with terror. He implored the society girl not to let the policemen take him. The policemen were obdurate. Finally the society girl gave up. "Well," she said, "if he must go home in a patrol wagon, I'll go home in it too." So they lifted the small boy in, and the society girl climbed in after him, and the policemen mounted guard on each side.

And thus it happened the few society people who were by chance shopping on that midsummer morning instead of enjoying the country breezes of the summer cottages were horrified at seeing a daughter of one of their first families rolling swiftly by in a patrol wagon under the charge of two stalwart policemen. And others who were not society people wondered what "that nice, respectable looking girl" could have done that the police were taking her away. And they marveled on the deceptiveness of appearances.—Chicago Tribune.

A Traitor as Base as Dreyfus.

The arrest of French spies in Germany and of German spies in France has long ceased to possess the element of novelty or to attract more than passing attention. But it is none the less true that an incident of this sort, if it came at a moment of international ferment, might serve to excite passions on both sides of the Vosges as readily now as as a quarter of a century ago. The case of the man Schwarz, who, with his family, has been imprisoned in Paris, is one particularly calculated to impress the French imagination. If he is guilty beyond doubts, as Le Temps declares, he is something much worse than an ordinary spy. He is an Alsatian by birth, served in the French army during the war and afterward elected to retain his French nationality. This gave him special claims to official consideration and secured him a good berth in the police service and a decoration to boot. It also put him in the very heart of the patriotic clubs and societies which M. Dorelode and his friends have organized and enabled him to learn the names of Frenchmen who were sent into Germany to spy out facts about the fortresses and to warn the Berlin authorities of their coming. He ranks, therefore, in the public mind as a traitor quite as base as Dreyfus, and at this time of general uneasiness his case may easily arouse even deeper national resentment.—Saturday Review.

Edison and the "Break."

"Dr. Norvin Green," says "Megaree" in the Philadelphia Times, "the long time president of the Western Union Telegraph company, claimed that he gave Edison the employment which was the beginning of his successful career, to which, as is well known, the Western Union corporation has largely contributed. Edison had been bothering the officers of the company with telegraphic devices they had no need of. He came into the office one day when it was impossible to obtain communication between New York and Albany, and the seat of the difficulty could not be located. He was banteringly invited to remedy the trouble. He said he could do so in two hours. He was laughed at and given two days for the task. His process was very simple. He telegraphed to the best operator in Pittsburgh and instructed him to telegraph to the best operator in Albany. The latter telegraphed his New York line down as far as he could, feeling his way from point to point, and sending the results to the Pittsburgh man, who forwarded them to Edison. In less than one hour Edison said to the anxious officials, 'The break is two miles from Poughkeepsie.' That simple method insured his status with the Western Union people and won for him a hearing in all his schemes."

Alling Heirs to Thrones.

The Czarowitz is in the last stages of consumption and he is not expected to leave Copenhagen, where he now is, alive. Archduke Francis Ferdinand of Austria is in a very critical state from disease of the lungs. He has been given unlimited absence from the army and is under medical treatment in a remote health resort in the Tyrol.

The young crown prince of Italy is also ailing to such a degree as to more than ever convince people that he will not live to succeed to his father's throne. The heir to the Grand Duke of Baden is consumptive and has no heir. Prince Albert of Manners, unlike his elder brother, the lamented Prince Baldwin, who perished in such a mysterious manner, is extremely delicate, and so, too, is the little crown prince of Germany, whose health is a matter of grave anxiety to his parents. In fact, his second brother, Prince Eitel, his superior in stature, weight, cleverness and general health, is almost universally regarded as the real heir to the throne.

No one would dream of describing the Prince of Wales as a healthy man, while his son, the Duke of York, has never entirely recovered from the effects of the typhoid fever with which he was laid low just about the time of the death of his elder brother. In one word, one may look all over Europe without finding in a single heir to a throne in whose health and physique his future subjects can place confidence.—Chicago Record.

His Only Rival.

"I have never yet heard Bunkins say a kind word about anybody," remarked the gossip citizen.

"Neither have I," was the response.

"He's worse for running people down than a trolley car."—Washington Star.

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